

How to start a secret society

10 effective steps for managing a group of people

A Tlon Corporation guide

There are many
reasons to start a
secret society. They're
fun and mysterious, but most
convincing of all is their
creative fertility. Don't
waste your breath decoding the
enigma from outside the cave
when you could just as
easily make your own
imprint instead.

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STEP 1.

Identify your purpose.

Ask yourself: What am I doing this for? Who will join me? Am I a leader or will I ultimately be led? If a society like the one I imagine already exists, would I join it instead? Why is the sky blue, the grass green, and bonding essential to survival? In short: determine your *raison d'être*.

STEP 2.

Build a frame.

Every group itself exists within a group. Begin to outline the physical boundaries of your congregation: you are astronomers and therefore only meet at night or on full moons; you are luthiers, so your gatherings must be acoustically resonant; you are hackers, so you need a safe place to convene.

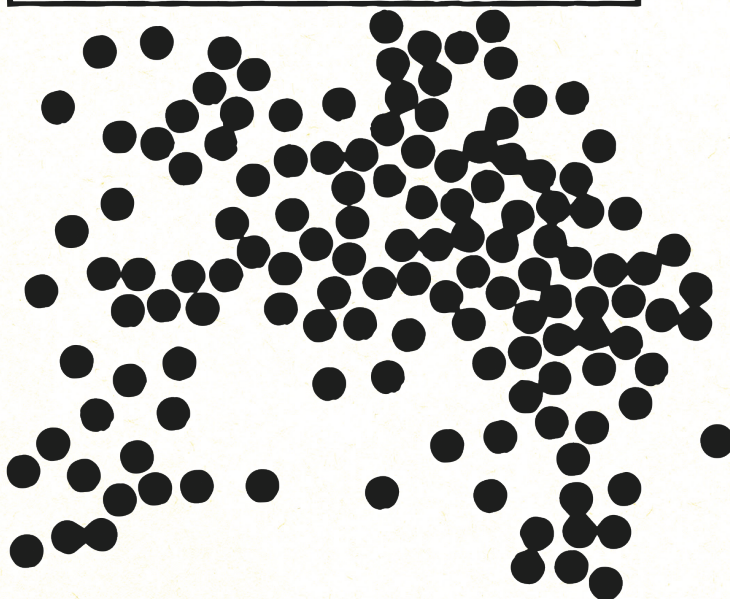
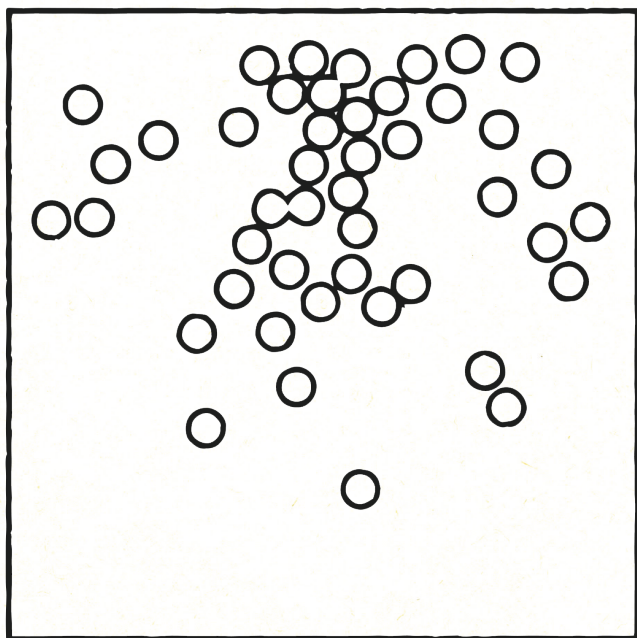
STEP 3.

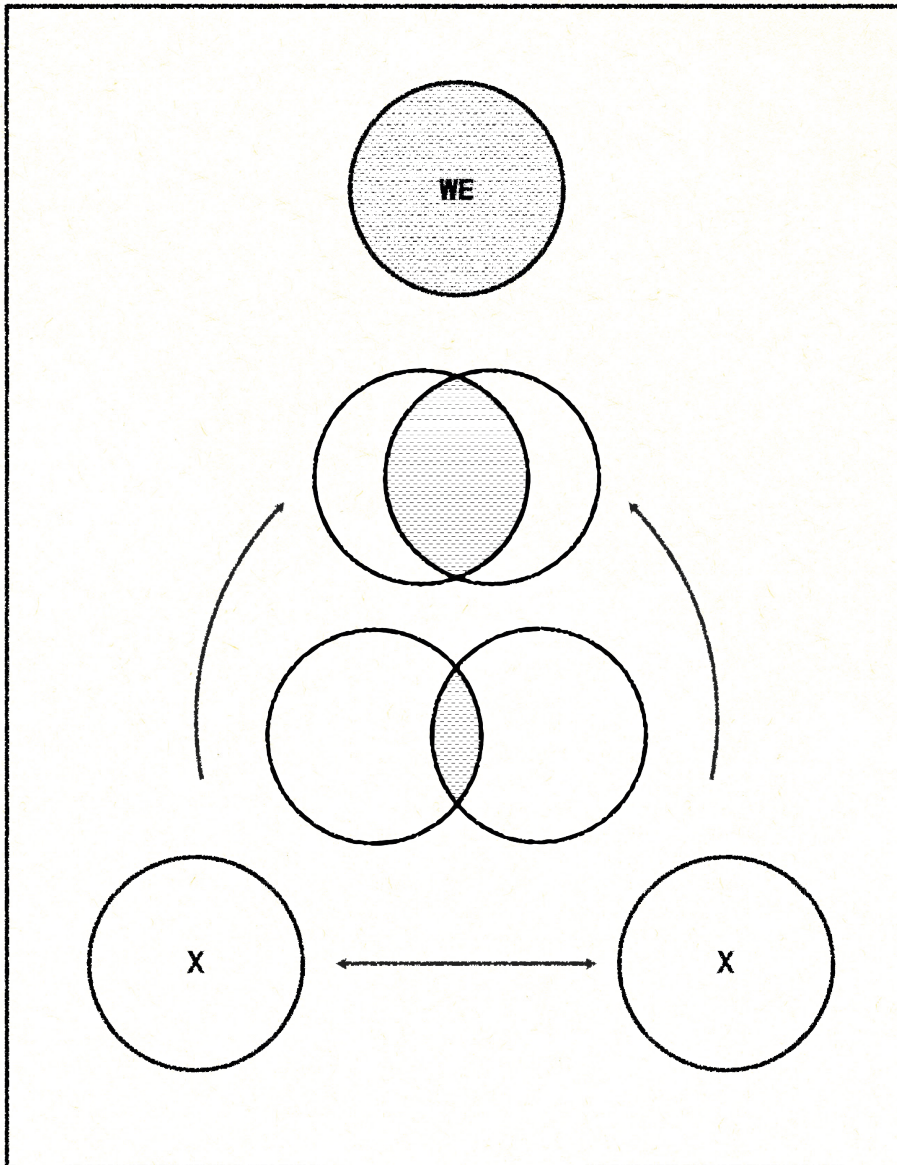
Create meaning through discipline.

Cultures, groups, families, and even companies rely on distinct, but often universal, rules to operate. If you expect your syndicate to succeed, you must adopt particular bylaws to inspire devotion, manifest significance, and imply that you are working toward something.

The more peculiar your bylaws are, the more seriously they'll be taken. Members must communicate through obscure runes over an encrypted network. Gatherings occur when certain planets and stars are aligned to fit your predetermined preference. Food can't be consumed twelve hours before or twelve hours after your meetings. Leaders wear capes; acolytes wear hats. We wear red. We never say Me. We never say I. There is only We.

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STEP 4.

Craft your ritual.

Whether your secret society consists of ten people or one hundred people, it's vital that you also establish a habitual procedure for your gatherings. Signs and signals engender a sense of belonging. Begin each convergence with password permissions. Add an extra layer of secrecy with elaborate handshakes. Declare your motto proudly at the meeting's introduction and conclusion. Light copious candles. Rigorously discourage any attempts to change your routine.

STEP 5.

Recruit lieutenants.

Most societies form hierarchies. Even if you don't plan to amass a global empire or rule with an iron fist, someone has to forge the path that everyone else will follow. To function effectively, your group needs at least one leader (you, hopefully) and many lieutenants who will energize acolytes.

Start small. Survey your network, reaching out to a handful of trusted and shrewd candidates. Introduce them to the precepts of your group and devise a subtle method to test their potential loyalty. Institute a system for rewarding good behavior and discouraging bad behavior. Sometimes splintering into factions is necessary to encourage the proliferation of your group's doctrines.

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STEP 6.

Be obsessive.

Together with your newly recruited lieutenants, organize a daily schedule and stick to it. Ensure that every minute of your day is accounted for and every detail is executed with ruthless precision.

Write down an account of your activities each night before resting. Track the comings and goings of your followers. Maintain a list of everything you consume, from meals to supplies. Record on a fixed scale your inner circle's morale. Leaving behind a meticulous account of your habits will only add to your group's future allure.

STEP 7.

Invite new members.

Now that you've built a frame, established doctrine, and matured internally, you're ready to open your doors to suitable initiates. Preserve secrecy through the careful selection of prospective members. Send out invites through secure channels, in riddles or a nearly impenetrable code. Before they arrive at the proposed destination, instruct them to wear certain attire and confuse them with misdirection.

When they arrive, make their entrance comfortable with personal introductions, welcome packets, and simple registration. Design an unforgettable, cozy ambiance to guarantee their return. Above all, convince them that your group will accumulate even more abundance with their membership.

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STEP 8.

Develop enthusiasm.

Excitement leads to contentment, which then leads to power. The happier your group members are, the more internal cachet you will accrue. Host lavish parties and give gifts to the most obedient devotees.

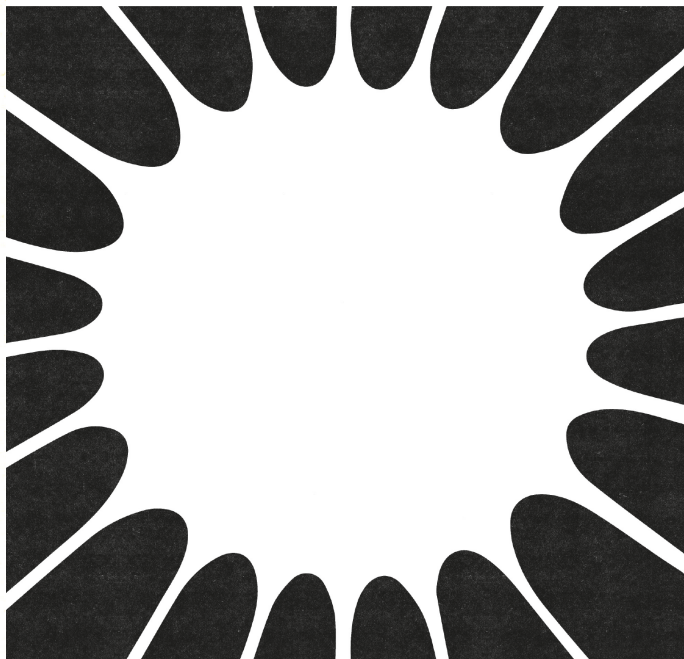
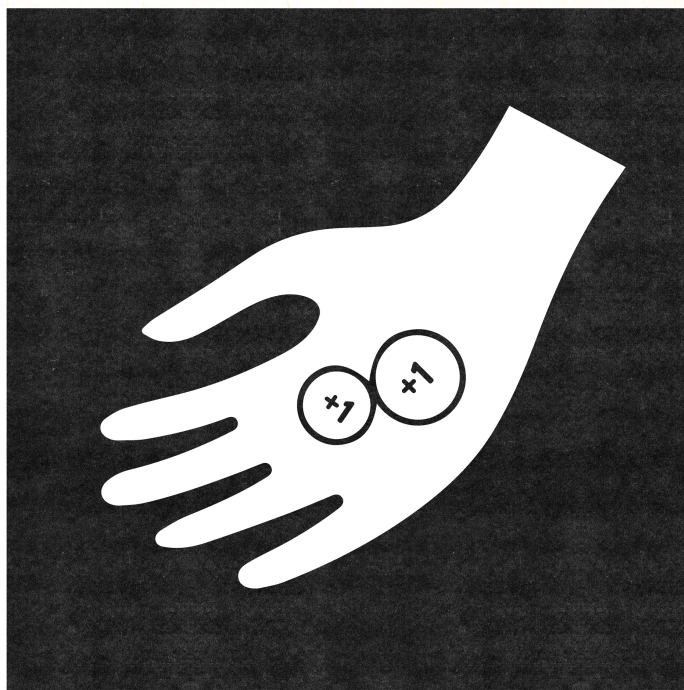
Every once in a while, break rank. Gesture toward bending a tradition, demonstrating your group's openness and flexibility. Smile. Always remind your acolytes of their individual contributions to the group's prosperity. Commitment requires constant nourishment.

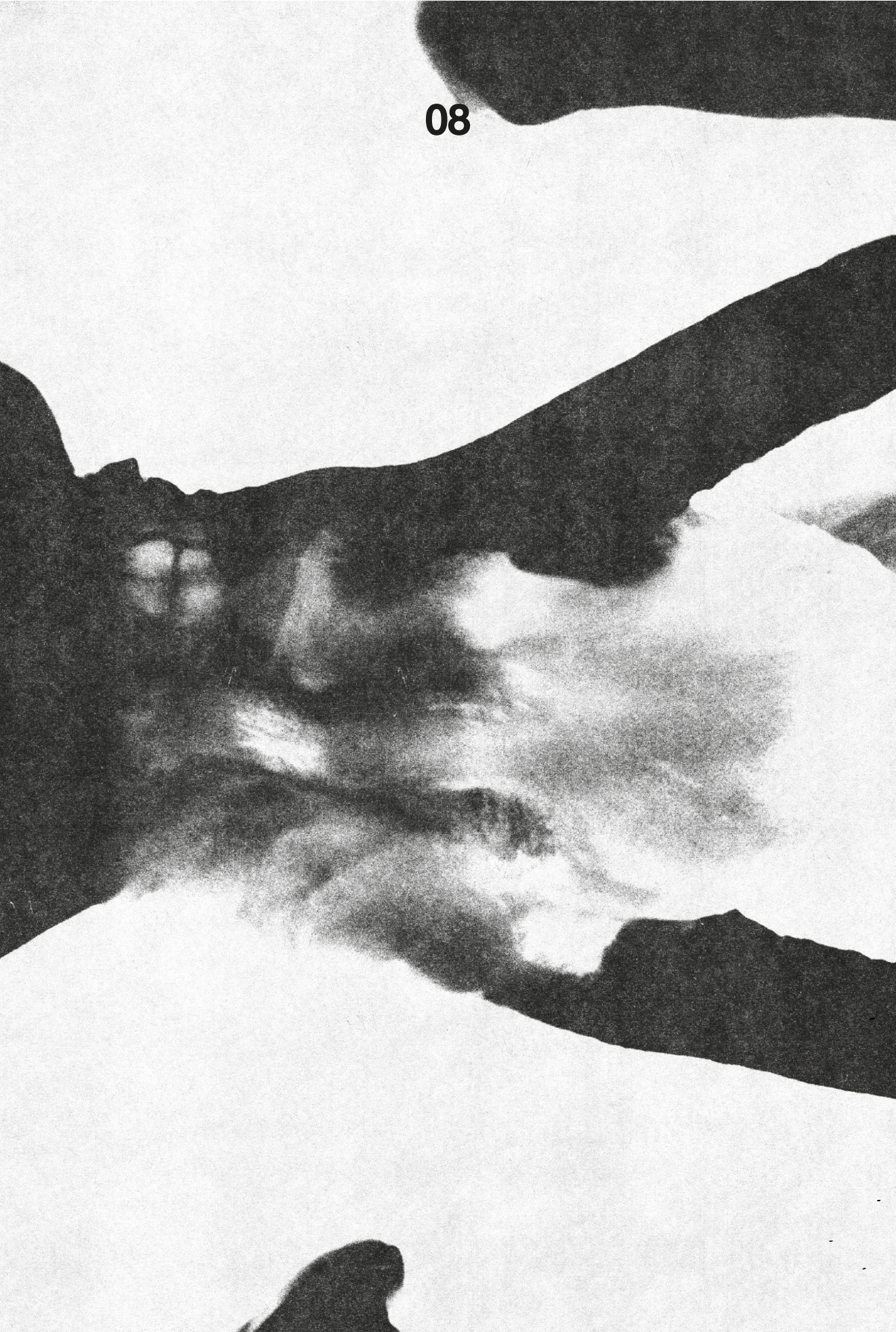
STEP 9.

Test their dedication.

Once the engines of routine run smoothly and self-sufficiently, test your acolytes resolve through an artificial threat to the group's privacy. Enlist trusted lieutenants to lend the plot authenticity.

Request that your followers go to great lengths to protect your group and its survival. Just before the blood sacrifice transpires, announce that the danger has been vanquished and the culprit has been excommunicated. Thank them for their loyalty.





STEP 10.

Always evolve.

Despite the rigor of your rituals and endurance of your traditions, stasis will destroy all that you've created. Stay true to your core beliefs while preparing to adapt them over time. Don't bow to challenges or even suggestions... Remember: everything is part of a plan.

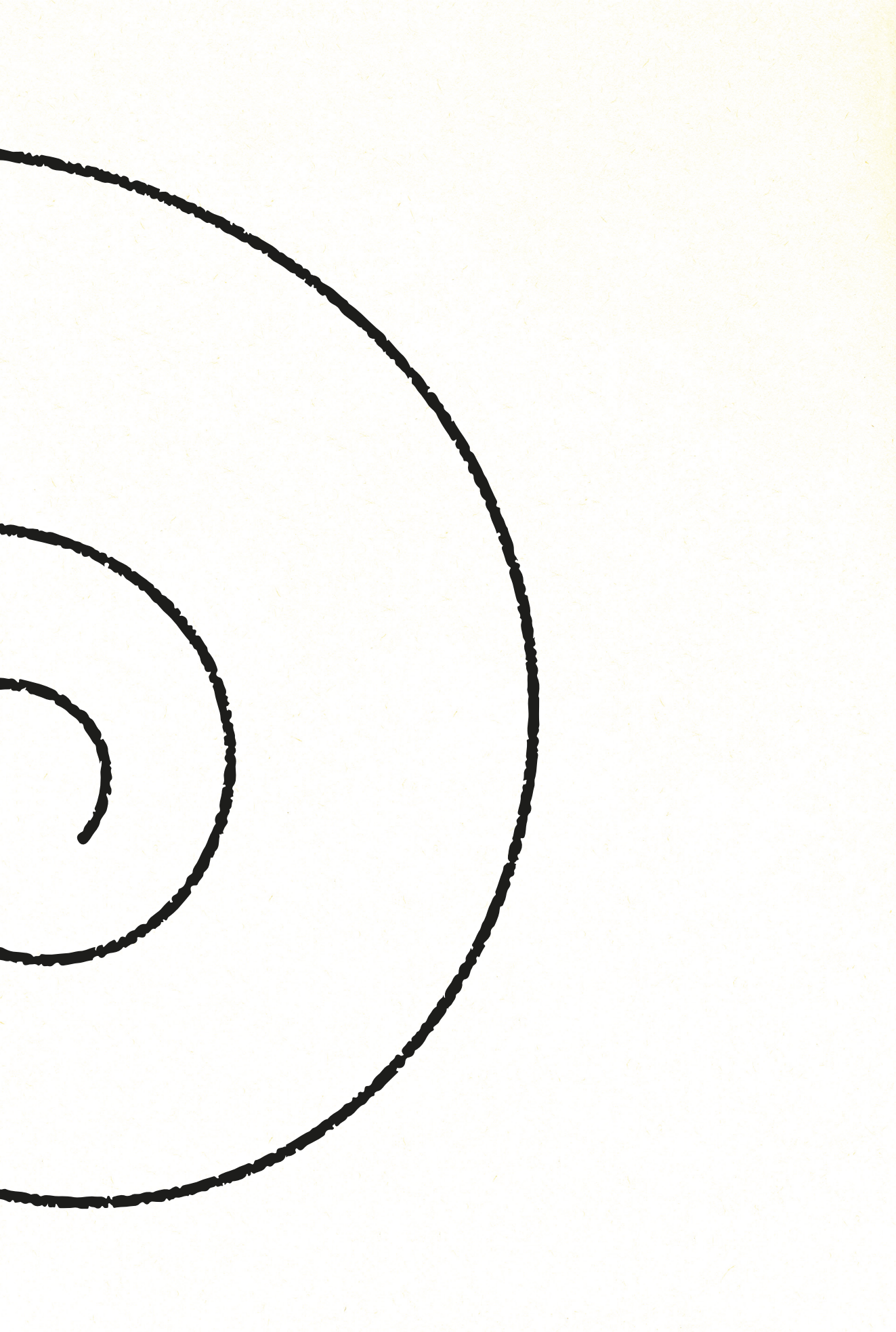
Insist that any adjustments originate from within. Instead of only wearing red, shift to wearing red on Wednesdays. Instead of capes and hats, try stars and insignia. Loosen some restrictions, but never forget that there is no me. There is only We.



There is

only WE





Wish you were on Urbit.
Wish you were in Miami.
Wish you were next to us on the beach.
Eating sandwiches.
Piecing together the night before.
Our recollection of the weekend is a kaleidoscope of each of our
subjective experiences. Where one of us blacked out, another one of us
might remember. Some parts remain forgotten altogether.
A little bit like Urbit.
The sun's setting. The tide's rising.
Wish you were here.